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THE most efficient step, we believe, toward encouraging Art, is to bring the artist and the amateur together in more familiar intercourse. This would soon be brought about, if it were generally known that artists' studios were accessible to the public, and particularly if artists were to appoint a time when they will be free to receive visitors. We shall have something to say hereafter of this, and at present shall only suggest that the artists inform the public of such times,—in which service we shall be happy to render the assistance of the columns of THE CRAYON.

We must take the earliest occasion to offer our humble and hearty protest against the stupid plans for an enlargement of our City Hall. The respectable City Father, who, in the debate on the plans, alluded to the Louvre as the City Hall of Paris, and insisted on it, because he had seen it a half-a-dozen times—"I've seen, and sure I ought to know"—is only a mild specimen of the architectural dullness of public officials on matters of Art. The design offered is one of the worst, so far as impressive display is concerned, that we ever remember to have seen. There is nothing broad or artistic about it. The idea of filling up any more space in the Park is in itself intolerable. The only rational plan, it seems to us, is to leave open all the space we have now, and erect all new buildings outside the Park, where the display will be effectual. Let the city buy the property on Chatham Street, opposite the Park, and build there—they will then add, indeed, to the effect of the *coup d'œil* of the neighborhood, *i. e.* if the buildings are fine, and if not, then their ugliness will be the more effectually shown up. The plan recently proposed, of giving up the lower end of the Park to the United States for a Post-Office is still worse. That a government having thirty or forty millions of dollars lying idle should receive as a gift a portion of the only breathing-place this part of the city possesses, is most unreasonable. If they want to build there, let them, as just recommended, take a location outside the Park, and thus add to the beauty of the city instead of taking from it. Architecture needs space to be seen from—if it has it not, we may as well build dry goods boxes, on a large scale, with plenty of windows, and let them suffice.

Why can we not have an intelligent Fine Art Commission to judge with regard to the plans for public buildings, painting of the Governors' portraits, and such things, which no Common Council, since Venice was a State, have been able to judge rightly with regard to. We have artists and architects, and men of taste enough in the city, who are capable of judging justly and impartially, with regard to such matters, and who would willingly act on an unpaid commission, if it were made entirely independent of politics. It is well worth trying, and we would like to be able to cherish a hope that New York will set an example to the American cities in this matter, by putting the Fine Art interests of the public into the hands of those who are by nature fitted to become guardians of them. It is idle to talk of the jealousy of artists and such stuff. Artists have never the meanness of jealousy which the friends of artists have, and they have at least a reverence for their Art which, in most cases, secures a candid judgment. A commission could be formed entirely of artists, which would be less actuated by professional and personal jealousy than one formed from men of any other class. The plan is well worth trying, and must by necessity succeed better than the arrangements by which we have succeeded in committing so many wretched mistakes in our civic Fine Arts.

We were much pleased to see at Church's studio, a few days since, a picture of Cole's which we had never before seen, a wild stormy composition, with a strong Poussin feeling of

tone and color, and differing very strongly from his later works. It is bold and energetic in its handling and conception. It is the property of Mrs. Cole, and is, we believe, for sale.

One comforting evidence of progress in public taste we find in the uniform of our city police. It is at once the most tasteful and fitting that we know of, and is a most agreeable contrast to the rigid, iron-looking English uniform, and equally removed from the warlike semi-military guise of the *gens-d'armes* of France. We are glad that the modern hat is disavowed by the authorities, and we only wish that in larger matters there had been at work the same common-sense perception of neatness which produced the police uniform.

THACKERAY AND RUSKIN ON TURNER.

WE publish, by way of curiosity, the criticisms of the two great critics of England upon Turner, in his last phase. They are interesting as relating to the same thing—the picture Ruskin treats of being one of those which Thackeray classes together so humorously. Our readers will, we are sure, excuse the quotation from so well known a work, as the *Modern Painters*, in consideration of having the two to compare. To our mind the truth lies with neither, but between the two:

"I must tell you, however, that Mr. Turner's performances are, for the most part, quite incomprehensible to me; and that his other pictures, which he is pleased to call 'Cicero at his Villa,' 'Agrippina with the Ashes of Germanicus,' 'Pluto carrying off Proserpina,' or what you will, are not a whit more natural, or less mad, than they used to be in former years, since he has forsaken nature, or attempted (like your French barbers) to embellish it. *On n'embellit pas la nature*, my dear Bricabrac; one may make pert caricatures of it, or mad exaggerations, like Mr. Turner in his fancy pieces. O ye gods! why will he not stick to copying her majestical countenance, instead of daubing it with some absurd antics and fard of her own? Fancy pea-green skies, crimson-lake trees, and orange and purple grass—fancy cata-racts, rainbows, suns, moons, and thunder-bolts—shake them well up, with a quantity of gambouge, and you will have an idea of a fancy picture, by Turner. It is worth a shilling alone to go and see 'Pluto and Proserpina.' Such a landscape! such figures! such a little, red-hot coal scuttle of a chariot!

"As Nat Lee sings—

" 'Methought I saw a hieroglyphic bat
Skim o'er the surface of a slipshod hat;
While, to increase the tumult of the skies,
A damned potato o'er the whirlwind flies.

"If you can understand these lines, you can understand one of Turner's landscapes; and I recommend them to him, as a pretty subject for a piece for next year."—*Thackeray's Lecture on the Fine Arts.*—*Fraser, June, 1839.*

"But, I think, the noblest sea that Turner has ever painted, and if so, the noblest certainly ever painted by man, is that of the *Slave Ship*, the chief Academy picture of the Exhibition of 1840. It is a sunset on the Atlantic after prolonged storm; but the storm is partially lulled, and the torn and streaming rain-clouds are moving in scarlet lines to lose themselves in the hollow of the night. The whole surface of sea included in the picture is divided into two ridges of enormous swell, not high, nor local, but a low, broad heaving of the whole ocean, like the lifting of its bosom by deep drawn breath after the torture of the storm. Between these two ridges, the fire of the sunset falls along the trough of the sea, dyeing it with an awful but glorious light, the intense and lurid splendor, which burns like gold and bathes like blood. Along this fiery

path and valley, the tossing waves, by which the swell of the sea is restlessly divided, lift themselves in dark, indefinite, fantastic forms, each casting a faint and ghastly shadow behind it along the illumined foam. They do not rise everywhere, but three or four together in wild groups, fitfully and furiously, as the under strength of the swell compels or permits them; leaving between them treacherous spaces of level and whirling water, now lighted with green and lamp-like fire, now flashing back the gold of the declining sun, now fearfully dyed from above with the indistinguishable images of the burning clouds, which fall upon them in flakes of crimson and scarlet, and give to the reckless waves the added motion of their own fiery flying. Purple and blue, the lurid shadows of the hollow breakers are cast upon the mist of the night, which gathers cold and low, advancing like the shadow of death upon the guilty ship, as it labors amidst the lightning of the sea, its thin masts written upon the sky in lines of blood, girded with condemnation in that fearful line which signs the sky with horror, and mixes its flaming flood with the sunlight—and cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, incarnadines the multitudinous sea. I believe, if I were reduced to rest Turner's immortality upon any single work, I should choose this. Its daring conception—ideal in the highest sense of the word—is based on the purest truth, and wrought out with the concentrated knowledge of a life; its color is absolutely perfect, not one false or morbid hue in any part or line, and so modulated that every square inch of canvas is a perfect composition; its drawing as accurate as fearless; the ship buoyant, bending, and full of motion; its tones as true as they are wonderful; and the whole picture dedicated to the most sublime of subjects and impressions (completing thus the perfect system of all truth, which we have shown to be formed by Turner's works)—the power, majesty, and deathfulness of the open, deep, illimitable sea."—*Ruskin.*—*Modern Painters.*

The Ames Manufacturing Company, Chicopee Massachusetts, have an advertisement in our columns, which deserves more than a simple glance. It marks an era in the History of Art in this country. They advertise that they will do what, until within a few years, we have been obliged to have done in Europe—cast any description of artistic bronzes from a statuette to the Colossus of Rhodes, if necessary, and will guarantee the quality of the work to be equal to that of the best European foundries. Castings in bronze for ornamental purposes, we believe, are made here, but we are not aware that there is any other foundry where large castings such as require artistic treatment can be made. Every step of progress made in this country towards emancipation from European dependency, in matters of Art, is one of the truest marks of advance our country can make. The Ames Manufacturing Company derive their advantages from Mr. H. K. Brown, the sculptor, whose time and money for years were spent in perfecting this description of casting. The advantages of his taste and experience joined to Yankee skill, have made this company safe in their promises. The Ames Manufacturing Company are about to cast, amongst other things, Brown's Washington, and R. S. Greenough's Franklin.

The National Academy of Design having sold their property on Broadway, are necessarily compelled to make other and temporary arrangements for their forthcoming Annual Exhibition, which will this season be displayed in the rooms lately occupied by the Dusseldorf Gallery. Arrangements it is hoped will soon be made to erect a suitable and permanent habitation for the Institution, which will render such arrangements unnecessary.

We are kindly furnished by a friend, a water color artist, with the following statements, with regard to a subject which has our warmest sympathy. A society of painters of water color, in New York, was organized in December, 1850. "The object and purposes of the society are to promote among its members the practice, and to cultivate in the public a taste for the Art of Painting in Water Colors," and having the establishment of an Annual Exhibition in view. The only way in which the society has yet appeared before the public, was at the Crystal Palace, where a screen full of works was exhibited for a few weeks. The society carry out part of their functions by an evening school, at No. 58 Fulton street, on Tuesdays and Fridays of each week, from November to March. Persons, not members of the society, are admitted on payment of a moderate fee, but they have no control in the society's affairs. There is no limitation to the number of members—the present number is twenty. At Quarterly Meetings the business of the society is transacted. At the meetings on other months, guests are invited to inspect pictures in water color, and the works of Art generally, provided by members. Two days in the year the society, in a body, has a sketching excursion somewhere in the vicinity of New York. There are no Honorary Members—the society feeling that they are a body of students, having yet to acquire reputation for themselves. The expenses of the society are defrayed by *pro rata* contributions of the members. A part of the receipts is to be set aside for the purchase of costume, draperies, &c., for use of school.

Parties desirous of further information on the subject, may obtain it from Mr. Samuel V. Hunt, No. 66 Fulton street, upstairs.

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